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Roots of Rutherford



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ROOTS OF RUTHERFORD



and

N.C. HUMANITIES COMMITTEE

Introduction	1
Raleigh Biggerstaff	3
Irene Harrill	9
Mary Hollifield	12
Baxter Hollifield	14
Ben Humphries	17
Kenneth Logan	19
Tom Melton	21
Lee Andrew Wright	24

ROOTS OF RUTHERFORD
An Oral History of Rutherford County, N.C.

Rutherford County is a small, rural area located in the foot hills of the Appalachian Mountains in Western North Carolina. Most of the residents have been born and raised here , and many work in the textiles and furniture industries upon which the county's economy is based. Because of its location and the families who have lived here for generations, the county is rich in Appalachian tradition, folklore, and heritage.

This project, the first of its kind in a scholarly and educational setting in Rutherford County, sought to explore, capture and document some of the colorful history that exists in the area. The stories, based on taped conversations with county residents, represent many of the roots of Rutherford County: Indian tribes which at one time settled here, Nancy Hanks and the birth of Abraham Lincoln, the orgins of blue grass music, life in a mill village in the early twenties the Depression era, the Sunshine and Bostic communities, the early days of public education. It is hoped that the reader will catch the essence of life as it has been lived here and will discover anew the county's rich and interesting past.

Our sincerest appreciation

to each interviewer who so generously contributed his/her time and wisdom

to the guest speakers, Roger Whitener, Bill Bynum, Raleigh Biggerstaff, Tom Melton and the Cliffside folks who shared their knowledge of folklore and Rutherford County History

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Taped interviews and typed transcripts therof, on which these stories are based, will be housed in the Old Tryon Room, Isothermal Community College.

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RALEIGH BIGGERSTAFF

Interviewed by
Edith Edwards

On a typical Sunday in Cliffside, folks attended church, went home for dinner, and then used the afternoon to relax with friends and visit relatives.



Raleigh Rutherford Haynes was born in the Ferry Community of Rutherford, "several miles over the hill and fields to the west" on June 30, 1881. The land that became Cliffside was purchased from Max G. Padgett's great-grandfather, Jessie E. Scruggs. Mr. R. R. Haynes was the prime organizer of Cliffside. He and associates, Dr. T. B. Lovelace, L. A. Holland, Dr. J. F. Whisnant, Gaither Kennedy and Henry Jenkins incorporated the mill in 1901.

In the early 1900's the form of transportation was not as convenient as it is today. Supplies to and from the mill were brought in by rail, 3 miles north of Cliffside, and brought into town by mule-drawn wagon. Later, the Jaynes Company constructed its own railroad line thus connecting with other towns. Some folks used horses for travel but most folks just walked. Young boys often "hopped the train" and got rides to Avondale and Henrietta for the fun of it. People worked and played in their own communities.

On a typical Sunday in Cliffside, folks attended church, went home for dinner and then used the afternoon to relax with friends and visit relatives. If it were summertime, folks made ice cream in the backyards or perhaps went to the park to hear the band'play. You might find teenagers walking the trestle sharing a bag of "sweets."

The first product made at the Cliffside Mill was gingham, then terry towels and washcloths. During World War II, the mill made a canvas type material. On Wednesday nights, the picture show closed while the churches had their regular meetings. There were no dogs allowed in town. Nor was dancing allowed. During the daytime, someone would go meet the "mail" at Dobbinsville and possibly other places and bring it to the mill office area where folks would get it when they got off work.

Houses were painted every five (5) years and the date was stenciled on the side of the house so the company would know when to paint again. Houses were rented by the week at 25 cents per room, it was withheld from the payment of cash received each week from the mill. For fire protection, every fifth (5th) house had a red ladder attached. When a fire broke out, the mill whistle would be blown. The hose cart had two high wheels and a "T" handle. Two men placed their feet on the rear bumper of a car, and leaned their backs against the trunk and held the handle. The water was available through the fire plugs. For sometime when there was no running water in the houses, several families would use water out of same community spigot.

The mill whistle would be blown each morning as a signal to start work. It would be blown at 12 noon for dinner and 1 o'clock to resume work. It would be blown again at quitting time.

The mill company owned everything in the town and provided buildings for the grocery stores, the Pressing Club (Cleaners), the cannery, and a 3-story building, the R. R. Haynes Memorial Building, which was dedicated to the citizens of Cliffside on June 24, 1922. Within this building were many facilities: a gymnasium, a barber shop, a jewelry store, a cafe, and rooms for overnight visitors. When there was no water in the houses, you could go to the memorial building for a shower, paying 15 cents for bar of soap, towel and cloth. One very special place in front of this building was the area where there was a rail. The menfolk would often gather there to "shine the rail," exchanging the talk of the day and night.

A child received an excellent education at Cliffside School. Discipline was maintained. Mr. R. R. Haynes saw to it that teachers' salaries were supplemented to get good teachers. Many folks from nearby areas did come to Cliffside because the education received there was much better. Clyde Erwin of Rutherford County was the principal for several years and then became superintendent of the county school system. Later, he became superintendent of the North Carolina State school system. He started a tradition of excellent education which carried throughout the state.

The Negros in the town lived on "White Line". Their school was separate, and Mr. Haynes and the company saw to it that their teachers were top quality. The white and black boys played together and swam together. Everyone treated the Negros respectfully. "Uncle Ben Merser" was janitor at the school for a long time and was favorite of all the folks.

A nickname was often given to a person due to an incident, activity, ability, appearance, expression, or athletic ability. Several folks have recently made a list of nicknames of Cliffside residents from 1900-1950 which will be incorporated in this account of the town. Hopefully everyone who reads them will just reminisce about the "good ole days."

Raleigh Biggerstaff tells of Uncle Dave Macon and Minnie Pearl of Grand Old Opry fame, visiting in Cliffside and entertaining folks that could get transportation to their performances. Local folks presented "Womanless Weddings," and Minstrel Shows and an All County Band often performed. D. C. Cole, Rutherford County's Music Man was the conductor. The music department at the school excelled, and many who went there turned into lifetime musicians. Radio also played a big part in the community's entertainment. Not everyone had a radio, so on Saturdays folks would visit those who did and listen to "Renfro Valley", "Louisiana Hayride", and "Grand Ole Opry" from Nashville, Tennessee.

In 1929, Herbert Hoover visited the Kings Mountain area and some folks went over to see him. Then, in 1936, after having spent the night at the Lake Lure Inn, Franklin D. Roosevelt came through Ellenboro by car. A lot of folks went to get a glimpse of him. Cliffside became a part of the "outside world" on December 7, 1941, when President Roosevelt made the announcement of World War II!

Whenever Cliffside natives meet, rejoicing stories unfold. Much more can be said of this "most unusual town".

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT ICC

Nicknames of Cliffside, N.C.

Residents known to:

Raleigh Biggerstaff

C. Alton Edwards

W. Henry Edwards

B.B. Goode

Robert/Etheleen Talbert

May 1985

ATKINSON, Bett	BLANTON, Butter
ATKINSON, Sis	BRIDGES, Central
ABRAMS, Lefty	BRIDGES, Cussin Bill
ABRAMS, Punk	BRIDGES, Snoopy
ADAIR, Bert	BRIDGES, Spurg
ALDRICH, Mandy	BRIDGES, Whitey
ALDRICH, Nub	BROWN, Lefty
ALLHANDS, Sonnyboy	BROWN, Sleepy
BAILEY, Bill	CAUSBY, Dimestore
BAILEY, Bugger	CAMP, Dimehead
BAILEY, Doc	CAMP, Slim
BAILEY, Liss	CAMPBELL, Spur
BARKLEY, Shake	CALDWELL, Onionhead
BEASON, Beas	CAUSBY, Nanner
BEATTY, Chief	CROCKER, Boney
BEHELER, Boots	CRAWFORD, Spud
BEHELER, Toad	Crowe, Baldy
BIGGERSTAFF, Big Pick	CROWE, Bud
BIGGERSTAFF, Boxer	CROW, Pet
BIGGERSTAFF, Buzz	DAVIDSON, Fessor
BIGGERSTAFF, Ginny	DAVIDSON, Tan
BIGGERSTAFF, Jake	DAVIS, Brownie
BIGGERSTAFF, Jobie	DAVIS, Slim
BIGGERSTAFF, Pick	DEDMOND, Peewee
BIGGERSTAFF, Tez	DILLINGHAM, Notne
BLACK, Giggs	DUNCAN, Railroad
BLACK, Stiffy	EARLEY, Snake
EDWARDS, Peck	HARDIN, Crip
EDWARDS, Skipper	HARDIN, Fat
ELDERS, Red	HARRILL, Slim
FISHER, Barto	HARRIS, Gramp
FISHER, Fish	HAWKINS, Buck
FISHER, Sonnyboy	HAWKINS, Little Red
FREEMAN, Shine	HAWKINS, Peg
GOODE, Stingy John	HAWKINS, Sister
GOODE, Bodge	HAWKINS, Tubby
GOODE, Bum .	HAWKINS, Wormy

GOODE, Captain	HENSON, Mose
GOODE, Foothie	HENSON, Sookie
GOODE, Shine	HICKS, Urp
GOODE, Toots	HILL, Cowboy
GOSEY, Lum	HOLLIFIELD, Butcher
GOSEY, Molly	HOOPER, Rosie
GREENE, Brother	HUMPHRIES, Did
GREENE, Fat	HUMPHRIES, PeeWee
GREENE, Red	HUMPHRIES, Red
GREENE, Sister	INGRAM, Bones
GREEN, Tutt	INGRAM, Et
HAMES, Ab	JENKINS, Zeb
HAMES, Bunker	JOLLEY, Lightnin'
HAMES, Shot	JOLLEY, Monk
HAMES, Newt	JOLLEY, Tog
HAMRICK, Cos	KENDRICK, Farmer
HAMRICK, Red	LAVENDER, Red
MOORE, Lum	PADGETT, Nish
MOORE, Pete	PADGETT, Rush
MOORE, Tense	PADGETT, Shib
MOSS, Buzz	PEARSON, Snag
McCRAW, Harry	PEARSON, Winky
McCURRY, Pug	POWELL, Buddy
McCURRY, Fuzz	PRICE, Hogeye
McCURRY, Schooner	PRICE, Beater
McDANIEL, Duck	PRUITT, Materhead
McDANIEL, Big Mack	PRUITT, Squirrely
McDANIEL, Little Mac	QUARLES, Squalls
McDANIEL, Pearooney	RAINES, Rusty
McKINNEY, Jeff	RAINES, Smiley
McKINNEY, Mutt	RAMSEY, Billygoat
McKINNEY, Poodle	RAMSEY, Horsey
McMURRAY, Splvet	REID, Blackie
McSWAIN, Baby	RHYMER, Pete
McSWAIN, Howart	ROBERSON, Beam
McSWAIN, Sister	ROBERSON, Slick
ROBINSON, Roughcut	TALBERT, Strawberry
ROBINSON, Till	TALBERT, Wimpy
ROLLINS, Molly	TATE, Skinny

SARRATT, Gen	THOMAS, Bill
SCRUGGS, Boss	THOMPSON, Skipper
SCRUGGS, Cliff	TONEY, Back
SCRUGGS, Dick	WATKINS, Squire
SCRUGGS, Shorty	WEBB, Mutt
SCRUGGS, Slim	WHITE, Shot
SCRUGGS, Snow	WHITE, Diver
SCRUGGS, Whitey	WILKIE, Bill
SCRUGGS, Zoe	WILKIE, Dit
SHORT, Big Red	WILKIE, Flip Flop Suzie
SHORT, Knotty	WILKINS, Fons
SHORT, Little Red	WILSON, Earn
SHORT, Oot	WINN, Hotdowell
SHUFORD, Sally	WOMACK, Shorty
SIMMONS, Mose	WOMACK, Teddy
SIMMONS, Pop	WORTMAN, Baffer
SPLAWN, Grinner	WORTMAN, Hickey
SPLAWN, Ma	
SPLAWN, Scissors	
SPARKS, Shorty	
SPARKS, Speedy	
SPARKS, Toad	
SUGGS, Shoepatcher	
SWING, Sweat	

IRENE HARRILL

Interviewed by
Barbara Callahan

Back in Bible times, when people began to build the Tower of Babel and God made the nations, these people from the eastern countries came to the upper part of Siberia, and from there they came to Canada and landed on the shores. Then they came here. They were the original Americans. They are called Amerinds now in the literature written about them.



Over the years, many Forest City children have literally grown up at Irene Harrill's house, their names, ages, and heights recorded on the back of her bedroom door. Though she never married and had children of her own, all of these children grew to love and respect her, and today, many return as adults to visit her. Neighborhood children as well make regular treks to Irene's house, where they have spent countless hours with her, learning everything from how to make fudge to how to identify different species of birds and wild flowers. To these children, my own son among them, she is affectionately called Aunt Irene.

Much of the lure of going to visit "Aunt Irene" lies in her willingness to share her own special knowledge and interest with these children. Many have gone to her for help in a special science or history project or simply to see her large arrowhead collection and hear her recount the many interesting facts and stories she knows of Indian history.

Her interest in Indian history begins with her own family. Her grandmother on her mother's side was a full-blooded Cheraw Indian, who, according to Irene, was considered with her sister to be "the prettest girls in all of Chester, South Carolina." But her interest doesn't stop with family genealogy. Irene has devoted much of her life to gathering information about the Indians who lived here and collecting Indian artifacts. From her research and from her large collection of Indian arrowheads, tools, and pottery, which, according to Irene, tell a story that dates further back than written records, Irene has pieced together much regarding the Indians in Rutherford County:

Before the Revolutionary War, a large Indian tribe had settled over most of Rutherfordton County. In the center of what is now Forest City, at the Old Bob Webb Spring, was the midden, or cooking place of an Indian village. According to Irene, "We have proof of it from the ground itself because there are so many fragments of pottery in the field surrounding the Bob Webb Spring that are blackened on the inside by some waterproof substance and blackened on the outside by cooking fires."

This village, in all likelihood, dated back several thousand years. Again, the proof is from the ground, from artifacts which have been dated by the carbon method. Irene recounts the following history of how the Indians came to America:

...Back in Bible times, when people began to build the tower of Babel and God made the nations, these people from the eastern countries came to the upper part of Siberia, and from there they came from Canada and landed on the shores. Then they came here. They were the original Americans. They are called Amerinds now in the literature written about them.

These Indian people migrated according to the seasons, hunting in the mountains of western North Carolina in the winter time and settling here in the spring and summer to grow their crops. Because they were nomadic, they depended on water and followed water courses. They knew which springs and natural wells were good drinking water and which were not. In their symbolic picture language, bad water was indicated by a round circle with heavy lines going from side to side. Good water, however, was indicated by a water marking tree. Basing her comments on her research and on first hand knowledge, Irene tells of such a tree in Rutherford county:

One of the most interesting things I found out about this Indian village was the fact that there was an Indian water marking tree there. Only twelve are known to have been in existence in all of the United States. This tree was located about fifty yards from the Bob Webb Spring... It was a persimmon tree, and a persimmon is slow growing and very, very hard. It takes about a hundred years to develop hard-wood. When it was a very small sprout, say about four or five feet tall, the Indians bent it over just about three feet from the ground; bent it in the direction of a spring in Ellenboro. The message that the Indians got when they saw the water marking tree was, "There is good drinking water within one day's march of this spot."

This tree, as Irene remembers it, was huge: "The tree was big enough that if there were two of me standing with our hands clasped we could just barely reach around the trunk of it." Although the tree has since been cut down, photographs have been taken of it and are still in existence. Other evidence of it exists as well. Both the water at the Bob Webb Spring and the spring in Ellenboro have been tested and found to be some of the purest water that has ever been discovered.

The Indians settled here in the early summer months because the land was fertile and there were many springs from which to draw water. The village itself was surrounded by fields where they grew their crops: pumpkins, beans, squash, and their principal crop, maize. Irene describes how they planted their maize:

The Indians fertilized the ground with fish. The men broke up the ground with wooden tree trunks by dragging them over the ground. The ends of the trunk were sharpened so they would go into the ground, and they pulled their trunks with their own labor, using deer skin reins to fasten themselves to the trunks. The children, usually carried the fish along and dropped one into each hole where they intended to plant a stalk of corn. The women came along and dropped the seeds, and behind them came a man with the limb of a tree and covered the ground. So you see, it was really an industry for the whole family. Everybody worked.

Irene's collection of Indian arrowheads, fragments of pottery, and knives and axes attest to her assertion that artifacts can still be found here. And, she says, they give us many interesting bits of information on how they lived. Her collection includes a quartz knife which she found at Forest City Elementary School. Demonstrating its use, she explains:

...See, it's made so that you can use a deer skin string and tie a handle to it to use it. The sharp edge was what was used, generally, to clean hides because the garments the Indians wore in winter time were made of deer skin hides. And when they killed the deer and skinned them, they used a knife like this to scrape off flesh on the inner side.

...Her arrowheads also tell a story:

There were times when the maize the Indians grew for bread just didn't last through the winter time, and they had to resort to hunting. And that is why some of the arrowheads in my collection are labeled bird points. A bird point is a small arrowhead that was made to be shot from a bow to hunt small game such as rabbits, squirrels, even birds.

Also included in Irene's collection are pieces of Indian pottery, including an Indian paint pot, soapstone which the Indians carved, and a fragment of a lid from a child's burial pot. Fragments such as these reveal much about Indian life, including their burial rites:

When it came to burials, some Indians burned the bodies. Some buried them. In Tennessee, Indians made stone graves by using flat rocks from the rivers. They dug a pit in the ground, lined it with rocks, and put in the bodies of the dead. In nearly all of the Indian tribes, the pottery was made by the women, and they taught each girl, as she grew old enough, to make the pottery.... But the pottery was rough, and as the usual thing, when a child died, the mother would make a burial sepulcher for that baby. She made a very fine piece of pottery for the inner burial container, and the for the outside, she made a big heavy rough piece of pottery because pottery, when it's burried in the ground, will last for ages.... So the Indian mothers, as they grieved for their babies, made pottery to bury them in....

Such a burial pot, containing an inner pot with the body of a small child, has been found on the banks of the Catawba River in North Carolina.

Irene has also pieced together the history of the Indian tribes here when the first settlers came. Tribes fought among themselves and also fought against the white man who gradually took over his land. Sometime between 1600 and 1730 there was a battle in Rutherford County between the Cheraws and the Cherokees in which they almost wiped each other out.

As the first pioneers gradually moved in, the Cherokees retreated to the mountains of western North Carolina. The tribes which remained organized raids against the settlers. Taking the Indian's stand, Irene explains how the Indians must have felt when the white man took over his land:

The Indians resented very much the white man's encroachment on his land. You see, what they did was take the hunting lands, and the Indians very life depended on his hunting grounds as much as on his fields.... When you take a man's home territory from him, you've disabled him. You've assured the fact that he'll not be able to make a living for his family.

One of the most interesting stories told about the Indian raids during this period (1600's ¹ 1820's) is recorded in The History of the Hamrick Generations by Stephen Collins Jones. Irene recounts that particular story:

There was a man named McSwain and his wife. They lived in a log cabin, and they had a little boy that had very, very red hair. And , you know, the Indians thought their gods favored people who were born with red hair. So they made a raid on this McSwain cabin. The little boy, five years old at the time, had gone out alone to collect fire wood. The Indians captured him and took him away. He was brought up an Indian and taught all the tricks that the Indian boys were taught. He was about 14 in the war of 1812 when he finally was restored to his family. But in the meantime the McSwains had another little boy, and they named him George for his missing brother. This little fellow had black hair and so they called him Black Haired George. Then, when the War of 1812 came and the missing child was found with an Indian tribe and restored to his parents, the McSwains had two Georges. They were distinguished by one being called Red Haired George and the other one Black Haired George McSwain.

These are just a few of the many stories that Irene Harrill knows. She has spent a lifetime collecting information not only on Indian history, but also on family histories and on Rutherford County history. She has devoted a lifetime as well to sharing that knowledge, beginning as a primary teacher when she was 18 years old in 1922 and later working with the first Girl Scout Troup organized in Rutherford County in 1934. This year, 1985, she celebrates her 80th birthday. In her own words she is so thankful for the friends, neighbors, and children who have meant so much to her, yet it is truly we whose lives have been enriched by knowing and loving her.

MARY HOLLIFIELD

Interviewed by
Cindy Kilgore

Sunshine was at one time a thriving community all the way through; even though people did live hard, still they lived good.



If ever there was a woman who wore a sweet country smile, it has to be Mrs. Mary Gettys Hollifield of Sunshine. It's hard to recall a time when someone heading over to the Hollifield homeplace didn't know Miss Mary would have some good home-cooked meal or sweets setting out. I spent a lazy Friday afternoon eating a freshly baked rhubarb pie in the company of this fine lady as she related these tales to me.

Miss Mary was born in 1916 on Duncan's Creek, "a long ways off the road, back up next to the mountain." Her family, prior to her birth, had been in this area for four generations. She describes Duncan's Creek "as just kind of a valley between the mountain." She still has a sister and a brother living over there. As she recalls, "it's just the most water in that valley that you've ever seen. There's just a little branch everywhere. That was a place with a lot of water coming from both mountains."

Miss Mary is the second child out of five children. She went to Mount Harmony School- a one room schoolhouse. At first, she recalls, they had curtains that divided the room, and they had two teachers; then later, there was one teacher: "The first teachers I went to were Miss Jessie and Miss Lettie Sheehan. One teacher, Miss Lettie, taught first and second grades, and Miss Jessie had the higher grades. They had first grade over in one line or one line and a half, or how many ever there was. They'd come over there and have our class, then go over to this other line of desks and have their class. The desks were too long; two would sit on them at a time." They studied the basics: reading, writing, and arithmetic. She remembers a primer reader, Baby Rae; she believes she has a copy of it over at her daddy's.

Her daddy was a teacher all over the valley and finished his teaching over at Sunshine Boarding School in 1920. "One year," she recalls, "when he was teaching, he got the flu real bad. There was one to two of the students that died. So, he come in one evening, and was hanging up his overcoat, he was so sick that he liked to not got in the room. So, he lay for several weeks. We all had it and got better. There was a doctor in Sunshine at the time. But the doctors were so over-worked that they couldn't get to everyone."

I asked her about discipline in the schools. She replied that although there weren't as many students, they were better behaved than they are now and that they were expected to get out and play hard. She added, "but we didn't have too much of a problem; every once in a while a little bad boy would have to get a-switching." (Ironically, her husband, Baxter, had told me his tale of school mischief). "The teachers weren't afraid to make a child behave; children knew if they didn't behave, they would get a hickory stick."

Lunchtime was a time when she traveled home. The school was a kind of center and most children did go home at dinner. She remembers the Ramsey family:

Mr. Jesse Ramsey's daddy, they had a big crowd of children, Fanny and Sid Ramsey, they had come in kind of file; there must have been six or seven of 'em, and the front boy, Crawford, he carried the big ole lunch basket. He'd be in front. They packed 'em plenty; they were all healthy, and they packed 'em plenty to eat. They'd just go and have a picnic.

There were approximately sixty students at this time at Mount Harmony School from first to seventh grade. And then, when the Sunshine Academy was closed, there wasn't anything there until 1929 when the county voted in the high school. Mary finished at Sunshine. When Sunshine was a boarding school, students came from as far as King's Mountain. The students did not actually "board" at the school but in homes of the community. To get there, children had to walk, even during the winter months.

Although she knew him when she saw him, she did not meet Baxter until she was in high school. He was older than her and had already finished school. They "courted" two years prior to marriage, which meant going to church, community functions, and family get togethers. The roads weren't good, so traveling was kept to a minimum, and her daddy wouldn't let her be out late at night. The school, at the time, was a thriving part of the community. In the auditorium at school, there would be standing room only during plays and commencements. These occasions were usually followed by a ball game. The Depression crosses her mind quite often, but as she explains:

We weren't big livers before it come, and when it did, why, we just farmed and had everything we needed to eat at home; raised most of it, and had plenty of-- maybe not fine clothes but plenty to wear. We didn't notice it out here like we might have been noticed in a place where people depended on going to the store for everything they had. You'd take somebody who didn't grow everything they had, and that hurt. They worked at public work. But there was usually something Baxter did in the neighborhood; he worked at something during the winter months. Then we'd farm and raise what we were going to have during the summer. So, it wasn't as bad as I have heard people talk about it who lived in towns, because you take a big family in town, they really suffered. We had our milk and butter and eggs. And we had our own wheat (flour), corn, and our canned fruit and vegetables. You can just imagine what a different life it would have been in town, from the country. We depended upon nature to be good, and she was.

According to Miss. Mary, Sunshine used to be a "right bustling little town" with two or three stores with a fairly good business. There were cotton gins, a dentist's office, and a photographer. There used to be a store over at Robert Ramsey's place that used to sell beer and tobacco. And another one (Bell's) that listed as a creditor Abram Enloe. "So, he was right here. I do know that in the year at that time, he was around here, for there was a store over there. It was at one time a thriving community, all the way through; even though people did live hard, still they lived good."

There were four stores in Bostic, a bank, the railroad, and a hotel. When the gold mines were opened in the Valley [Golden], people would come to mine. The mining seemed to be big business at the time and there was a bus, called the "gitney", that went from Bostic to Golden Valley- despite the lack of pavement.

Miss Mary's first experience in a car was a Model T, "a little open car," with two seats, a canvas top, and crank. She turned one over once and lost interest in driving, although she did try Baxter's A model. Her longest trip in one was "not very far" to Forest City.

In 1933, she and Baxter were married in Gaffney with a few friends attending. They didn't go on a honeymoon, but came "right on home." Her home was built in 1895 by Baxter's father, Crittenden, and the land has been in the Hollifield family for one hundred and twenty years.

After Miss Mary shared stories and old family photographs with me, I indulged in some more of her homemade rhubarb pie. Her sister-in-law, Miss Edna, also of the homeplace, saw me off with an armful of flowers to replant in my yard. It's always a treat coming and going from the Hollifields'-for they make you genuinely feel right at home .

BAXTER HOLLIFIELD

Interviewed by
Cindy Kilgore

Grandpaw was Deputy Marshall, United States Marshall. And he went on Cherry Mountain one time and cut down Amos' still.



Early Sunday afternoon is the time to catch a tale with Mr. Baxter Hollifield. For as the day advances, all kind of neighbors and relatives, from children to cousins to grandchildren, find their way to the warmth of Baxter and Mary's porch.

I caught Mr. Baxter on such an afternoon and was entertained by days gone by in the community of Sunshine. The stories here are after my eager urging him to relate these aspects of Sunshine, moonshining and the KKK. Be they sweet or not they are history.

Baxter Hillfield's grandfather, (1822-1907), was a United States Deputy Marshall, and Mr. Baxter recalls these events from his childhood:

Grandpaw was Deputy Marshall, United Stated Marshall. And he and his men went up on Cherry Mountain one time and cut Amos's still down. Amos had thirty or forty hogs; had them in a pen. Feed them still slop, y'know; that's the way he had his. They went up there and cut him down one time. And he made thousands of gallons of beer, y'know. Ready to run the liquor. They emptied the hogs' trough. Every hog he had got drunk. They were all stretched out!

Amos met Mary Philbeck and two of her boys one time and he was riding a mule and they was in a buggy and he offered the boys a drink of liquor. She told him, says, "Amos Owens, if you ever offer my boys a drink of liquor..." Amos told her she was like a woman he one time knew. That she wouldn't allow her boys to drink any liquor and when they got grown, they stole the still!

Amos lived up on Cherry Mountain. Amos was an unlettered man; couldn't read or write, but he was smart. He got into something one time; he went to M.L. "Corncracker" White. M.L. White was a smart man, and he [Amos] wanted him to act as an attorney for him before the magistrate. M.L. White told him, "but I'm not a lawyer, Amos." And he [Amos], told him that any man who "conceded to nothing, contested to everything, and talked by the hour was a lawyer by nature." Amos didn't want to pay tax for making whiskey y'know. You could get a license to make it then. Mr. Calton, J. Van's grand-daddy, J. Van, he made whiskey there and he had a license to make whiskey.

Amos married a Sweezy. Went up on the mountain there. Went and told Old Man Sweezy he was gonna get married. Old man Sweezy was a-workin' in his tobacco. And Amos asked where Mary Anne was. Sweezy told him she had gone to get walnuts to make dye. Dye for cloth. Amos told him they'd been thinking of getting married that evening. And Old Man Sweezy said, "Marry, the devil!" Amos told him no. He didn't have any intentions of marring the whole family, he just wanted his daughter! So s he got on the horse behind him and they went and got married. They went on back to Amos' house, which was a three story house. In his words, it was one story high and three stories long. She went and set a hen that evening and he mended the harness and made an oxen yoke.

The following events took place at this same period of time, for Mr. Baxter refers to Amos as the leader of the "Ku Kluxing":

Mr. Jim McGaha, he lived on this branch here. And he had gone to Mr. Ben Bigerstaff - he was sick - to sit up with him. The Ku Klux went to McGaha's that night, whipped his wife; they took her dress, brought it over her head and tied it then whipped her. They raked out hot ashes from the hearth and set a year or two year old baby on that. And the next morning, it hadn't snowed their tracks out; it was snowing a little that night. McGaha went and killed Decatur Depriest [one of the Klan]. Well, McGaha did leave, but they couldn't run him nowheres; he left on his own. He went to Tennessee. Well, that fall, my grandfather, he looked after McGaha's family that year. Then he got 'em to move out the next fall, in the night. They went to Tennessee, where McGaha was at. That was in 1870, and in 1877, there's a feller, Carson, lived down below Washburn; Old Carson-he is a half-wit feller. And he had been to Rutherfordton, and there's a bunch af the Ku Klux Klan around up there who had found out where McGaha was at. They wrote a letter to Oak's daddy a-tellin' him where McGaha was going to get up a bunch and go get him. Well, Oak thought, he came back to my grandfather he thought that the proper thing for him to do. It wasn't a sealed envelope; it was just wrote on a piece of paper and wasn't sealed in the envelope. He thought that was pretty good news, so he stopped. Told Grandpaw what they said, and he handed him the letter and said, "read it." He did. Oak went on home. Grandpaw and my daddy saddled a pair of horses and left from my great grand-daddy's place at twelve o'clock that night. They rode to one mile beyond Gillespie's Gap. That's in Mitchell County, which is about forty or forty-five miles. Grandpa got Dale Hollifield to saddle a horse and start on to Tennessee. He got to Tennessee and told McGaha that the Klan found out where he was at, and they were making arrangements to bring him back. Of course, they had got word over there for them to arrest him. He killed another man over there when they were a-huntin' him; why, he killed another man. That's in 1877. Well, course they never did hear anymore about him. That was the last of hearing anything about him.

In 1925, I was fifteen year old, just a boy at that time: one of McGaha's sons had made a doctor and he had come back. McGaha had left there and gone to Illinois, and this doctor had come back into Tennessee and was in Ioda, Tennessee. In 1925, he drove up in the yard here and he eat dinner here, and we took him to his old home place. Then, He was back here in 1927 or 1928. He made two or three trips.

None of the Hollifield boys had ever encountered the Ku Klux Klan, but they were good at making practical jokes and imitating them. Mr. Baxter relates one such account:

Harvey Hollifield, he loved to play a trick on somebody. This feller, Jesse Wells his wife went somewhere to be gone a day or two. Jesse was afraid to stay at home by his self, afraid of the Ku Klux Klan. Harvey made it up with some fellers for them to put some white sheets on their horses and then put on white and carry a stick up that way in one hand with a hat on top of it. He come to Jesse's that night; it was in warm weather. Harvey told Jesse, "you go away and takes your bath, and says I'll go out in the yard; it's too hot to sit in the house.

You, you go ahead and takes your bath and then come on out there. You won't have to put your shoes back on." So he got Jesse out in the yard, barefooted. Harvey got to tellin' what he knew about the Ku Klux then. He'd seen a bunch of 'em, eight feet tall, and they all rode white horses in the night. He got him stirred up pretty much. Then, they heard some horses coming. Harvey looked and said, "Bygads, says, that's them, right now!" They come riding on up towards the house. Harvey broke into a run, and Jesse did too, barefooted. They took after'em. They run'em about one mile and a half, and Jesse tore his feet all to pieces in the run. They wound back up at Grandpaw Hollifield's, and they told Jess then. Them fellers come riding on up and jerked off their hoods and let him see'em. And he was still afraid, though. He got one of them, to go over there and stay all night with him.

After sharing tales with Mr. Baxter, we went out in his garden and he gave me some gardening and culinary tips. I left that afternoon with an armful of rhubarb and a mess of spring onions, and a promise for more tales.

BEN HUMPHRIES

Interviewed by
Brian DeMarcus

If Bill Monroe is the Father of Bluegrass music, then Snuffy Jenkins and Smith Hammett have to be the Grandparents, and most surely Earl Scruggs is the Mother



Traditional music and the people of Rutherford and Cleveland counties who play it have long been overshadowed by the popularity of their neighbors in the mountains. The mountaineers seem to have gotten most of the credit for innovations in bluegrass and old-time country music. But, if Ben Humphries of the Cliffside community has anything to do with it, that image will soon change.

Humphries, who moved to Cliffside in 1937 from Cleveland County, used to listen to people like Wendell Lipscomb and Junie Scruggs play music at his Grandmother's get-togethers when he was a small boy. The impression this music made on him has resulted in a life-long love affair with the music and the people who made it. His home is filled with box after box of old 78 r.p.m. records by obscure musicians who have long since faded from the memories of most music fans. Being a history buff has made it easy for Ben to collect the music and the associated stories.

One such story that was shared with Ben by Lewis Jolley tells about Smith Hammett:

Smith was a well-known clawhammer banjo picker at the time, during the 'teens and 'twenties. One day a Black man came to the Flint Hill School playing a three-finger picking style on the banjo. Smith asked George Elam Scruggs if he could play that lick on the banjo. George replied, "No, I don't believe I can." Smith said, "I can't either, but I will." Within two to three weeks he was playing that three-finger style. He perfected it and taught many people how to play it.

Ben says that Rutherford and Cleveland counties have long been a "hotbed" of music. As far back as the late 1800s, people such as Amos Owens from Cherry Mountain were having music get-togethers. Ben describes a merger of musical styles:

The mountain musicians moved to our cotton towns, bringing their music with them. The tenant farmers had their music, too, as did our local folks. The flatlanders were more liberal than mountaineers and their music reflected a jazzier style. This music should have been called Broad River music because of all the local talent. A merger of these styles took place and out of that came people like Earl Scruggs. This music was played long before Earl went to Nashville, but he did popularize it to the masses. Earl pioneered so many things. Everything today is loosely based on Earl's work. He is a perfectionist. The whole Scruggs family was very musical. His older brother, Junie, plays a mean banjo.

Ben says he wants to honor Earl Scruggs for his contributions to bluegrass music with an Earl Scruggs Day in the community. He admits to not having gotten very far with it at the present, but still hopes to put it together in the near future.

One event that Ben has put together to honor local musicians is the annual Snuffy Jenkins Old-time and Bluegrass Music Festival, now in its eleventh year. Ben put this festival together as a tribute to the contributions of Dewitt "Snuffy" Jenkins and his brothers and nephew, Hoke Jenkins.

Snuffy is from the Harris community. He had a very musical family, also. He and his brothers often played in a band together. They played on the Crazy Water Crystal Barn Dance in 1934, which gave them nationwide exposure. The Jenkins Stringband used to win every fiddlers' convention. It got to the point where competing bands would hide the Jenkins brothers' instruments so they couldn't win the contests. Ben says that the worst part about the band was that they were never recorded. In 1937, Byrum Parker, the "Old Hired Hand," reorganized the band. Homer "Pappy" Sherrill joined the Hired Hands in 1939 and still plays the fiddle with Snuffy. Greasy Medlin played with them for a long time until his death a few years ago. Ben states that "Greasy was a 'Toby Clown' who started in medicine shows. He had a natural ability to ad-lib with an audience and his timing was perfect. He could captivate an audience with his humor."

Ben has collected ballads by local musicians as well. He recalls one such ballad by Maxie Marvel and his father, called "I'll Take My Cotton to Henrietta Mill." Another is "The Ballad of Daniel Keith," about a man who was wrongly hanged at the old jail. Legend has it that his shadow was seen on the jail walls for years and that every business that tried to make a go of it in that building went bankrupt.

Still another local ballad is "The Shelby Disaster," by a man named Hornsby. It tells of a bank caving in on August 28, 1928, killing several people. Ben says on the back side is a song about a Southern Baptist Convention treasurer who ran away with the money and the secretary.

Through efforts such as Ben Humphries' to preserve the music of this region, it can truly be said that a significant contribution has been made to the musical world. As Ben likes to proudly state:

If Bill Monroe is the Father of Bluegrass music, then Snuffy Jenkins and Smith Hammett have to be the Grandparents, and most surely, Earl Scruggs is the Mother.

KENNETH LOGAN

Interviewed by
Edith Edwards

The ole English, some Latin and some Greek that I have learned helped me to be able to teach Etymology.



On October 6, 1896 the second child, a son, was born to Garnett and Mary Lexine (Stewart) Logan and was given the name Harris Kenneth Logan. The family lived in the community of Westminister, Rutherford County, North Carolina.

Within a few years, the family moved to the Washburn Community and lived in the Stewart/Logan house which was built ca. 1820. The one-and-a-half story structure was built by James W. Carson. "The Big House", as "Mister" Kenneth describes it, was built of "hand-dressed" boards standing (vertical). When asked if the wood used was from the farm, he answered, "I suppose so - Yes!" The beams on the ceiling of the first floor have a unique edging design, and the ceiling of the first floor is the floor for the upstairs rooms. The kitchen was separate from the main house, and there was a "dog-trot" (enclosed) between buildings. His father eventually built the kitchen on to the main house. There were two fireplaces, one at each end of the house in middle of the side wall. These were used for heat and cookin' corn pone. Much love, devotion and appreciation of farm life were enjoyed here. Grandmother Stewart often read to Kenneth and the other children who by this time were Victor, Mary, Margaret and Sue.

Their Grandmother Stewart purchased a Reed pump organ for the household from Sears Roebuck Company, and with the help of Seagle Myers Correspondence School in Chicago, Illinois, the young folks learned to play. Victor and Kenneth learned the organ, the piano, the fiddle/violin, mandolin and guitar. Both men play the organ at the Presbyterian Church which was organized in 1909 in Bostic.

Activities in the community and school were baseball, wrestling, basketball and tennis. The Logans put in the first tennis court; then the Washburns, the Andrews family and the folks in the Westminister Community. To get to each area they would walk, ride horseback or travel by horse drawn buggy. There were no cars.

The first time Kenneth saw a car was when the family rode into Forest City by a mule drawn, 2 seated buggy to visit relatives, the McFarlands. His dad, who was driving the mules, saw the car approaching. He guided the buggy into another street, for he foresaw the mules taking a "dim view" of the car and possibly having an upset. They heard later that the car did go through the town of Forest City down by where the elementary school is today, and then on to Charlotte.

There were four boarding high schools in this area of western North Carolina which were primarily sponsored by the churches: Westminster (Presbyterian), Round Hill at Union Mills and Boiling Springs in Cleveland County (Baptist), and Rutherford College (Methodist) in Burke County.

Before H. Kenneth Logan graduated from the Westminster School in 1918, he taught for one year the course "Etymology," the origin of making words. Mister Kenneth thus related the following pronunciations: "telephone-tel-e-phone, automobile-au-to-mo-bile, graphophone-graph-o-phone, telegram-tel-e-gram". He said, "the Ole English, some Latin and some Greek that I have learned helped me to be able to teach the course". This Presbyterian School drew girls and boys from all over the United States and foreign countries. One of the young men later became head of the Presbytery in Brazil, South America.

On August 25, 1918, Harris Kenneth Logan reported to Camp Jackson, South Carolina, and was placed in the U.S. Army Field Artillery, 3 inch gunner cannon unit. He was in sickbay with the "flu" for a couple weeks. Soon after he recovered, he was sent by train to Camp Lee, Virginia. There were plans made for sending the soldiers overseas to Germany. The night before they were to get aboard ship, the soldiers slept with their overcoats on. The next day, November 18, 1918, they did receive the word that the Armistice had been signed, but they were taken to the ship, U.S. Tenadores, at Newport News, Virginia, where they boarded and spent all day on the freighter. The soldiers were unloaded that night and were taken back to Camp Lee, Virginia. The day before Thanksgiving, his unit was treated to a Thanksgiving dinner and left the next day by train for Camp Jackson, eating only "hard-tack" enroute. When they reached the camp, another Thanksgiving meal was enjoyed. Kenneth remembers it as "the biggest supper I've ever seen!"

In the fall of 1919, H. Kenneth Logan entered the education field for the public school system. He taught first at the Washburn School, which was located just south of the now Salem United Methodist Church. Then he taught at the Pinehurst School near the Corinth Baptist Church not far from Ellensboro. After that, he taught in Oakland for 5 years, Green Hill - 1 year, and then back at Oakland for 7 years. In all he taught 17 years. He was always "sought after" for the job of teacher-principal.

During his teaching years, he attended summer school at the following: 1921 and 1926 in Chapel Hill at The University of North Carolina: 1927 and 1932 in Hickory at Lenoir-Ryne College, and 1928 at the last summer school held in Trinity College, now Duke University. He also took General Agriculture, Poultry Farming, and

Orchard Planting through the International Correspondence School in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

As an agriculturist, he worked with peaches and apple trees in the Concord Community for forty years. He used the art of "budding" and developed varieties of peaches: a late white peach "Loganbelle" and a yellow which he named "Tarheel". He was in charge of the Poultry Department at the Rutherford County Fair and showed chickens at this county fair as well as the Cleveland County and the Spartanburg County Fair. He has many blue ribbons for his entries.

In 1940, the Logans moved to another dwelling which they and neighbors built themselves. The lumber they used came off of the farm.

TOM MELTON

Interviewed by
Diane Hoffbauer and Cindy Kilgore

Aunt Polly Price and Aunt Nancy Hollifield were about the same age as Nancy and were friends with her when she attended the Concord Baptist Church. . . They testified all their lives that they held Abraham Lincoln in their arms when he was a baby.



Tom Melton, a local Rutherford County resident, has been interested in the Abe Lincoln story for many years. It all began several years ago, when as the principal of Bostic School, he was given the Book Abraham Lincoln: A North Carolinian with Proof (c 1927 & 1940) by Board of Education member, Mr. R. Smart. This book, written by Dr. Coggins, was the beginning of many years of research and investigation by Mr. Melton. It is, therefore, with a strong belief that Mr. Melton shares the following story of Abe Lincoln's birth in Rutherford County:

In the late 1700's and early 1800's, a young woman, Lucy Hanks, was an itinerant spinner who traveled from one house to another doing needed spinning. She raised two daughters, Nancy and Mandy. When they were about ten years old, they were "bound out for raising" - the custom of giving children without parents to someone who would raise them. Mandy was bound out to the Pratt family, and Nancy was given a place in the home of Abraham Enloe on Puzzle Creek, who also had a daughter Nancy, the same age.

During this time there was a great western movement and the Abraham Enloe family moved to Oconolufte out towards Cherokee. It was here that it was learned that Nancy Hanks was pregnant. Mrs. Enloe (originally an Edgerton related to the McCurrys of Golden Valley) was a fretful, fussy woman who blamed her husband for the paternity of Nancy Hank's expected child. She "raised the roof all the time," not hesitating to accuse her husband. There's a story of a traveling salesman who spent the night at the Enloe residence during this time. There's testimony that he was told by Mr. Enloe that his wife hadn't spoken to him in weeks "on account of the servant girl" and that the "salesman shouldn't think too much of the situation." Nancy Hanks disappeared from Oconolufte soon after and no one knew where she went -so people talked and wondered. They liked Nancy; she was a pretty girl and hadn't done anything that would deny their support. They were about to call Abraham Enloe for an "accounting under the oaktree" in the early spring when the Honorable Felix Walker returned from his duties in the legislature. He was a Representative from Buncombe County. Abraham Enloe had worked for him, and he owed Enloe some favors for his support in the election.

Felix Walker heard the talk going around about Enloe being called in for an accounting, and he cleared it all up by explaining that Nancy Hanks was down on Puzzle Creek with a fine baby boy. So that settled the disturbance over what happened to Nancy Hanks.

Aunt Polly Price and Aunt Nancy Hollifield were about the same age as Nancy and were friends with her when she attended the Concord Baptist Church. They went to parties and quiltings with her before she had moved away. They testified all their lives that they held Abraham Lincoln in their arms when he was a baby. It has been determined that Felix Walker, in agreement with Abraham Enloe, had moved Nancy Hanks back to Puzzle Creek on his way to Raleigh to the legislature. This was two to three months before the baby was born. They went on horseback. Felix Walker saw her in Puzzle Creek on his return trip. The baby had already been born on Puzzle Creek.

Some people, however, said Nancy's baby was born in Mingus Creek and some said Mangus Valley, but not in Puzzle Creek. An old lady in the mountains at the old Ranger Station concession stand said Abraham Lincoln was born in Maggie Valley. These 3 places were recorded in *The Genesis of Lincoln* by James Cathey in 1899. Dr. Coggins read this and couldn't reconcile these stories with the ones he heard in Rutherford County. So he worked for about ten years to determine the real truth, which was that Abe Lincoln was born in Puzzle Creek, and that would prove the truth that Polly Price and Nancy Hollifield had really held him. People weren't lying when they said he was born in other places; they just didn't know. Recently, a woman spoke to the Historical Society in the Old Tryon Room and discounted all the stories.

A will was found in the Rutherford County record book where a man willed slaves to his son and daughter. One of the wills was signed by Abraham Enloe and Felix Walker in 1798. The other is from 1805 and signed again by Enloe and Walker. These wills document the fact that Enloe and Walker were in this area at the time of the birth of Abe Lincoln.

That spring after the baby was born, Nancy Hanks went to church at Concord Baptist Church. There was a revival meeting that spring, and Nancy got saved. Soon after this revival meeting, a wealthy Virginian came by on horseback and took Nancy and her baby with him. That was the last that Aunt Polly Price and Nancy Hollifield saw of Nancy Hanks.... That man was Michael Tanner, according to Coggins. Some think he was the father of Nancy Hanks, and that made him interested in Nancy and her boy. One lawyer has records

of family papers that he saw (but doesn't have because someone destroyed them) that indicated that Michael Tanner was the father of Nancy Hanks.

Nancy and Michael Tanner went back to Oconolufte and again stayed with Abraham Enloe. Enloe arranged for an itinerant sawmill worker, Tom Lincoln, to marry Nancy. Michael Tanner gave Tom a team of mules, a wagon, and \$500.00 to marry Nancy and give her and the boy a home in Kentucky. On the way there, Nancy Hanks and Michael Tanner stopped at Nancy Enloe Thompson's and spent a considerable amount of time before going on to be married in Kentucky. Jesse Head, a Methodist minister in Kentucky, married Tom and Nancy in 1806. The preacher is said to have testified that there was a little black headed boy at the wedding that wasn't introduced to him.... "Abe, little Abe was there, 4 years old."

The official birth record shows Abraham Lincoln born in Kentucky in 1809, but there is a story about him carrying a "turn of corn" to a mill 8 miles away when he was 7 years old. People said he couldn't have done it at age 7 because he would have been too small and too weak to carry so much so far. Coggins says Lincoln was born prior to 1806, so that would have made him 11 years old instead of 7. At that age, he would have been strong enough to carry the corn to the mill. There's another story about his being a grown man at 17. Coggins says he was at that time 21 - and would be a grown man - 6'4" tall. There are several other pieces of indicative evidence to prove he's older than his Kentucky birth. The Kentucky record of his birth was based on family records in the Bible of his stepmother, Sarah Bush Lincoln. It was in Lincoln's own handwriting. Perhaps he purposely lied about the date because he knew he could not be President if he was a bastard. He "fixed" the record so that it closed the questionable origin of his birth. He put it far enough ahead to be after the marriage of Nancy Hanks's marriage to Tom Lincoln.

Abraham Lincoln was not baptized or christened. He wasn't much of a churchgoer. Although he regularly attended church, he never joined because he was put off by bitter sectarianism and the narrow, bigoted denominationalism of his day. He didn't profess Christianity, but he prayed.... Once he was overheard to say, "Oh God, I cannot lead these people without your help."

The question of who Abe Lincoln's father was has never been answered. Coggins believes it was Abraham Enloe, but many other men have also been named. In the book, *Nine Fathers of Abraham Lincoln*, Smoke Martin of Duncan Creek is thought to be the father. Martin had courted Nancy Hanks but married Polly Hamilton of Rutherfordton instead. The Martins claim kin to Abraham Lincoln because of Smoke Martin's characteristic chin and broad forehead. Someone went into the Martin home many years after Abraham Lincoln had died and commented on the good picture they had of Abraham Lincoln on the mantel. The picture was of Grandpa Martin.

Another story tells of Abraham Enloe, who because he was a slave and cattle trader, made yearly trips to Charleston. Nancy Hanks went along on one of these trips to visit some of her Hanks kin who ran a boarding house in Abbeville, S.C. During her visit, she met a young traveling lawyer named John C. Calhoun. He looked just like Abe Lincoln except he had lighter hair. There was a romance, but he couldn't deal with a "certain situation," so he gave Nancy some money and she went back to Oconoluffe. Yet another story asserts that Abe Lincoln was half brother to Colonel Jeff Davis. But Nancy never confided to other friends who the baby's father was.

People question why there are no exact records of Abe Lincoln's birth. There are no records of midwives or a doctor assisting at the birth. But no one cared, that is, until he became the President. While he lived in Kentucky, there were no schools or churches (both of which keep records) because it was still the frontier. Therefore, the question of Abe's official birthplace may never be settled.

A marker has never been put on Abraham Lincoln's supposed birthplace on Puzzle Creek in Rutherford County, but since about the mid 1800's, both a Lincoln Hill and a Lincoln Road that runs near Walker's Mill (related to Felix Walker) have been in existence. In the end Lincoln is remembered as a fair, strong, and honest person. A favorite Abe Lincoln quote reads "If I were to try to read, much less answer all the attacks made on me, this shop might as well be closed for another business. I do the very best I know, the very best I can, and I mean to keep doing so until the end. If the end brings me out alright, what is said against men won't amount to anything. And if the end brings me out wrong, ten angels swearing I was right wouldn't make a bit of difference."

LEE ANDREW WRIGHT

Interviewed by
Les Beale

When grandpa returned home and related the events of the day to the family each and everyone teased him about "chasing the man he hated through two counties



My family, like most, is rich in humorous anecdotes, closeted skeletons, and tales of the "good ole days". As the family matriarch, my mother, Alice Wright Beale, is rife with stories from the past, and one doesn't have to push her too hard to have an impromptu "history" lesson.

Undoubtedly, her most colorful character is her father, my grandpa. The man passed on in 1954, before my fourth birthday; therefore, our personal acquaintance was minimal. Many vague pictures of him come into my mind when I reminisce my early childhood, but unfortunately, the most vivid was the day he died. It was at the front steps of our home. We had suffered a small house fire, and he was right in there helping the firefighters. The strain and excitement proved too much for him, and his strong heart gave out. As he emerged from the house for the last time amid billows of smoke, his son laid his hand on grandpa's shoulder and said "Let me help you, pop".

My grandpa pulled himself up to his normal square shouldered height, pushed by uncle's hand away, looked him in the eye and said "I don't need any help, I'm all right". Those were his last words.

Attempting to better acquaint myself with my genealogical past, I asked my mom to relate some family "ventures" that might help me gain some insight to my roots. The following episode I offer to prosperity.

In the turbulent days in and around the depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt was about the least favorite public figure known to Grandpa. He was convinced the President was responsible for all the problems that fell on the United States at the time. He wasn't alone in his views; and another Roosevelt detractor was Grandpa's drinking buddy, Mr. Hanks. Together, they carried on many "political science" discussions, all of which culminated in clearing up all the world's woes if only "old Frank D." was out of the White House.

At any rate, in running for his second term, F.D.R. scheduled a pass through Rutherford County. The caravan was scheduled to start in Lake Lure. To everyone's surprise, Mr. Hanks and grandpa got together before sunrise and "headed for the hills". By the time they got to the small community, they found themselves in such a crowd that after waiting for hours they only caught the briefest glimpse of the President and decided it "just wasn't enough". So, they jumped in their truck and "cut through the county" to try to see him in Rutherfordton. They got there "just behind him", so the race continued to Forest City. There again they saw him for only the slightest interval. At this point, the disgruntled pursuers decided they should go to Shelby where they could "really get a look at him".

Returning to the backroads, they made breakneck speed and arrived in Shelby before F.D.R. Along the way, they decided that they should locate themselves on the "New route" recently built through Shelby. Their reasoning was that a former state governor lived on this road, and they were sure that the cavalcade would pass his house. Most of the people of Shelby were thinking this way, so again they found themselves in an enormous crowd. They were content this time though, that they would finally get a close-up view of the Commander-in-Chief. Well, low and behold, old Roosevelt must not have been very familiar with Shelby, for he took the "old route". My grandfather and the majority of the turn out missed him, and by the time they realized he had already passed, it was too late to follow him to Charlotte, so at last they called it a day! When grandpa returned home and related the events of the day to the family, each and everyone teased him about "chasing the man he hated through two counties". The humor of the incident has passed from generation to generation, and his spirit remains with us to this day.

